

Mesothelioma claims UA's Deblock, 73

Greg Deblock, a pipefitter and former business manager of Portland Steamfitters Local 235 (which merged into United Association Local 290 in 1986), died from mesothelioma on Oct. 29. He was 73.

Mesothelioma is cancer of the lung linings caused by exposure to asbestos.

Deblock passed away on the second day of trial in a personal injury lawsuit he filed in Portland. One defendant in the lawsuit settled prior to trial for more than \$5.6 million. And, according to his attorneys, Deblock was poised to deliver "a knock-out blow" to the remaining defendants.

"He did not die in vain," said attorney John Caron, who was part of the litigation team comprised of the law firms of Roger Worthington, Simon, Eddins



GREG DEBLOCK

& Greenstone, and Swanston Thomas & Coon. "His case resulted in favorable rulings that will help Mr. Deblock's union brothers, who have been similarly poisoned, in future litigation."

Judge Michael Marcus ruled that under Oregon law, valve, pump, and boiler manufacturers can be held liable for failing to warn of the dangers associated with asbestos insulation, gaskets, and packing used with the equipment, even when the materials were not supplied by the equipment manufacturer.

"No longer will these manufacturers be able to avoid liability to Oregon workers who were exposed to asbestos when using their equipment by claiming that the asbestos insulation, gaskets, or

packing used with the equipment were supplied by someone else," Caron said.

Deblock was diagnosed with malignant mesothelioma in November 2006. He underwent surgery to remove the cancered left lung, but the tumor spread to his abdomen.

Deblock worked in the trades for nearly four decades. He was a dispatcher at Local 235 in 1976 before winning election the following year as financial secretary-treasurer. He was named interim business manager following the death of Matt Walters, and then was elected to that post in 1980.

He retired Feb. 1, 1996.

Deblock is survived by his wife Kyung; son, John; daughter, Mary Perry, and several grandchildren.

The Pacific Heart, Lung & Blood Institute is accepting donations and memorials in Deblock's name. Either can be made online at www.phlbi.org.

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Mark your calendars for Friday, Feb. 1, 2008 — the date for the 12th annual Oregon Labor Law Conference sponsored by the Oregon AFL-CIO, the Oregon State and Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Councils, IBEW Local 48 and the Center for Worker Rights.

The conference organizer is Norm Malbin, in-house attorney for Local 48.

The conference is for business managers, business agents and officers. The goal is to provide information that will help them do their job better and to help avoid legal liability.

More details will be published as the conference nears.

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Roger G. Worthington, P.C. has donated more than \$2.5 Million to medical research working on a cure for mesothelioma — more than all the asbestos companies combined.



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